



ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2018/19



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1. What is Overview & Scrutiny?

Boston Borough Councillors has 30 Councillors, all of whom share a commitment to improve the lives and wellbeing of the people of the Borough.

Seven Councillors currently serve on the Council's Cabinet and are known as Portfolio Holders. Cabinet has delegated authority to make decisions in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The remaining non-executive Councillors have the opportunity to consider issues in relation to the Council's services or wider matters affecting the community as a whole through the overview and scrutiny function.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees have no executive powers; they make recommendations to the Cabinet or full Council if they wish action to be taken, which may or may not be agreed. However, the function enables non-executive Members to undertake an investigatory process to review, support and improve services whilst holding the Cabinet and the Council's senior officers to account.

Whilst scrutiny arrangements are established to provide an independent process for reviewing Council decisions and policies, the intention is not for scrutiny to be a confrontational or divisive process, but to complement and add value to the work of the Cabinet.

2. How does Overview & Scrutiny work in Boston?

The Council's two Overview and Scrutiny Committees are each made up of 11 non-executive Councillors who consider services provided by the Council and, in some cases, services provided by partner organisations and other external bodies. These committees consider new policies that are being developed, look at existing policies to see how well they are working and examine performance information to check that standards are being met. The committees manage and are responsible for their own workloads – full details are given in section 5.

An effective overview and scrutiny function should provide the relevant committees with the ability to look at all aspects of service areas in order that service provision can be comprehensively investigated or scrutinised. The remits of the two committees were aligned with Cabinet portfolios two years previously, which allows each committee to undertake policy review, policy development, performance management and scrutiny reviews of areas within their remit.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees are able to establish time-limited task and finish group reviews that focus on a particular issue and consider it in greater detail than is possible at committee meetings. These reviews will include a mixture of interviews with relevant officers, research of best practice, meetings with service users and community groups and consultation with wider parts of the community.

The committees also consider Cabinet decisions that are 'called in' for scrutiny by four non-Executive Members and 'Councillor Calls for Action' from Members.



A Councillor Call for Action is a mechanism any Member of the Council can use to refer to the appropriate overview and scrutiny committee any 'local government matter', i.e. one relating to the functions of the authority which affect the Member's area or any individual who lives or works in that area, provided it is not an excluded matter and all other possibilities to resolve the issue have been exhausted.

NB: All-Member Briefings are scheduled to take place regularly throughout the year for officers and guest speakers to impart information to Members on topical matters of interest. These briefings are informal and give Members the opportunity to ask any questions they may have and can initiate ideas for matters to be scrutinised.

Full details of Boston's overview and scrutiny function are set out in the *Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules* at Part 4(E) of the Council's Constitution, which is available on the Council's website.

3. Who is involved in Scrutiny?

Every year, at the Council's AGM in May, 11 non-executive Councillors are appointed to each of the two Scrutiny Committees, though membership does change from time to time.

Membership during 2018/19 was as follows:

Corporate & Community Committee

Chairman: Councillor Paul Gleeson – Skirbeck Ward



Vice-Chairman: Councillor Colin Brotherton – Kirton & Frampton Ward

Councillor Richard Austin – Wyberton Ward

Councillor David Brown – Wyberton Ward

Councillor Anton Dani – Fenside Ward (until December 2018)

Councillor Maureen Dennis – Old Leake and Wrangle Ward

Councillor James Edwards – Kirton & Frampton Ward

Councillor Jonathan Noble – Fishtoft Ward

Councillor Elizabeth Ransome – Swineshead & Holland Fen

Councillor Sue Ransome – Station Ward

Councillor Brian Rush – Staniland Ward (from December 2018)

Councillor Judith Skinner – Fishtoft Ward

Councillor Stephen Woodliffe – West Ward



Environment and Performance Committee

Chairman: Councillor Judith Skinner – Fishtoft Ward

“I am delighted that the committee has embraced the new ways of working. The Inquiry sessions have been particularly productive producing some very good debate and sound recommendations. This has been well received especially in the case of the Boston Alternative Energy Facility.



Engaging with our local schools for our Markets Review has produced some valuable feedback to the committee and in return the schools have had an insight into how the council makes its decisions. This has also resulted in increased participation in our Local Democracy Week. The committee has also forged valuable links for any further consultations it take on in the future.

My thanks must go to the officers for all their hard work in arranging the consultations and collating the information received from them”.

*Vice-Chairman: Councillor Yvonne Stevens – Trinity Ward
Councillor Tom Ashton – Old Leake & Wrangle
Councillor Colin Brotherton – Kirton & Frampton Ward
Councillor Peter Bedford – Coastal Ward
Councillor Anton Dani – Fenside Ward (until December 2018)
Councillor Jonathan Noble – Fishtoft Ward
Councillor Barrie Pierpoint – Old Leake & Wrangle
Councillor Sue Ransome – Station Ward
Councillor Stephen Raven – Witham Ward
Councillor Brian Rush – Staniland Ward (from December 2018)
Councillor Stephen Woodliffe – West Ward*

4. A word from the Monitoring Officer

“Effective scrutiny is essential for good governance and strengthens the robustness of the decision making process. When the Scrutiny Committees examine the Cabinet’s proposals, objectives and draft programmes in order to inform their development before they are formally resolved, the Scrutiny function informs the decision making process by questioning, examining and constructively challenging thoughts, ideas and evidence. This allows the Cabinet and officers to identify areas of improvement prior to the decision being implemented and to have properly considered any impact of those decisions to be taken. Not only does this demonstrate openness and transparency in decision making, but it adds to the wider benefit for the Community and ensures the decisions taken are robust and reasonable.”



5. Review of the year 2018/19

Both committees worked effectively during 2018/19, with the Chairmen continuing to work together with officers to ensure that the issues considered were topical and worthwhile.

The committees each met for 6 scheduled meetings during the year. The committees reviewed their work programmes regularly throughout the year and scrutinised additional subjects, referring topics to each other in accordance with the committees' remits.

Following Scrutiny Training undertaken by Members in 2017, the two Committees agreed to align their remits with the Council's four Corporate Priorities with the Corporate and Community Committee remit covering Priorities 2 & 4 - *People and Public Service* - and the Environment and Performance Committee covering Priorities 1 & 3 - *Prosperity and Place*.

During the Scrutiny Training, Members also identified ways in which the committees could add value to their work, by examining issues through Inquiry Days and additional Task and Finish Group Reviews, rather than simply on a Committee agenda. Inquiry Days are a new way of working for the Council and involve Members and officers getting together informally in order for Members to receive full information and options on an issue and for officers to gauge Members' opinions, before drafting a focussed report for consideration at the committee meeting.

Here is a summary of the work of the committees during the year.

Corporate & Community Committee

On 1st August 2018, the Committee considered an **UPDATE ON TASK AND FINISH GROUP ACTIVITY on the LINCOLNSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PLAN (STP)**. Please see Section 7 for further information on the work of this Task and Finish Group.

On 30th August 2018, the Committee received a detailed presentation from the Partnership Manager for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on the roll out of **UNIVERSAL CREDIT** (UC), which was due to go live on 12th September 2018 in Boston.

After the presentation, Members asked a range of questions to alleviate their concerns about the rollout and the impact of UC. As a result of questioning, Members learnt that a significant amount of work had been undertaken in preparation for going live and intense training had taken place over a number of weeks. A high number of claimants would be in employment and would not need to come into the offices and many would only need to come when there was a change in their circumstances. There were several ways to apply for direct payment of rent and the housing element of a claim would be treated exactly the same as for housing benefit.



Also, a significant amount of preparatory work had been undertaken to help people currently claiming to improve their IT skills and to provide support for others with the telephony system was available for those who could not access IT at all. Every effort would be made to ensure UC payments were accurate and timely, with priority given to families with children though the onus was on people claiming to provide the necessary information to enable full payments to be made. Workforce planning took place constantly at high level and additional staff could be allocated to provide support if necessary. UC was tailored to every person's situation, including those of no fixed abode and those who were unable to budget and in debt and a significant amount of work had been undertaken in the last two years with charities and organisations that supported people with chaotic lives.

The Chairman suggested that Members needed protocols regarding how to deal with data and forms that people could sign to authorise Members to speak on their behalf. The Partnership Manager stressed the aim was to work together with organisations to support people and urged Members to get in touch if they had any further queries.

Members felt the presentation and answers had been interesting, informative and well explained.

Also on 30th August, the Head of Place and Space presented a report regarding the **FUTURE OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RUNNING OF ITS LEISURE, GUILDHALL AND SPORT SERVICES** following a tender exercise seeking Expressions of Interest.

The committee decided to recommend that Cabinet fully explore and progress the Expressions of Interest and report back on the outcome and details and that officers continue to explore improvements, efficiencies and savings to the current services.

On 1st November 2018, the committee received a further update on the matter. At both meetings, the reports were considered in private session, whereby members of the public were excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Section 100(A)(iv) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006; in this case it related to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

At the same meeting on 1st November, the committee received a report on the operation of the **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME (CTS)**, with an update on the process currently being undertaken and the options being put forward for consultation, prior to the formal approval of the 2019/20 scheme by Council in January 2019.



Members asked various questions, as a result of which they heard that cost figures would not be known until the uprating figures were known in January, but that the cost of uprating was not normally significant. The CTS scheme, introduced in 2013, was still well within budget in the current year and had never gone over budget. Modelling could be carried out with respect to the 75% cap, as this was part of the localised scheme (only pensioners were protected); however, modelling had not yet been considered because a fundamental review was required. The budget surplus had not been used to establish assistance schemes for the public.

The committee recommended the continuation of the current scheme to Cabinet, up-rating the amounts used in the calculation of CTS for working age claimants in line with Department for Work and Pensions' up-rating for working age social security benefits and non-dependant deductions. The minutes recorded a minority view; one Member was against the CTS scheme in principle on the grounds that it reduced money going those who were the most underprivileged. Cabinet subsequently agreed with the Committee on 28th November and made the same recommendation to Full Council, where it was approved on 21st January 2019.

On 7th February 2019, the Committee received a report on the **PARISH COUNCIL AND RURAL ISOLATION PROJECT GROUP**. The project group had been established as a result of recommendations from the Committee's Rural Isolation Task and Finish Group, which had conducted a review in 2015/16 to help rural isolation by working with parish councils. The parish council project group consisted of a varied mix of staff from across the council who worked with parish councils to enhance community engagement.

With parish council newsletters, liaison meetings and training sessions, the group had made good progress in building relationships and assisting parish councils and had delivered tangible outcomes. By working with other agencies, the project had also started to develop and implement ideas to help reduce rural isolation and loneliness. The group was considering an exit strategy to ensure how the improvements made could be sustained and continue to grow once the project ended in April 2019.

The Committee recommended that Cabinet support the continuation of working alongside Lincolnshire County Council on the rural isolation and loneliness project and acknowledge the hard work and effectiveness of the group. Members welcomed the continuation of many of the new links with the parish councils to have come from the working group and asked for an update at a future meeting.



At the same meeting, the Committee considered the **DRAFT BUDGET SETTING REPORT AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2019/20 - 2023/24** as part of the consultation process on the draft, and Member's comments were fed back to Cabinet prior to the budget being approved at Full Council on 28 February 2019.

The report outlined the 2019/2020 revenue and capital position for the General Fund and the proposals for the setting of discretionary fees and charges. The Local Government Act 2003 required the Chief Financial Officer to report on the robustness of the budget. The estimates had been prepared in a prudent manner, although it was highlighted that there were a number of elements outside of the Council's control, which would be mitigated through budget monitoring and risk management processes.

Having taken advantage of the Government's four-year settlement announcement, the final year of which was 2019/20, the Council was entering the period beyond that in a reasonable position taking into account the new financial regime from 2020/21 following the upcoming Fairer Funding Review, the proposed introduction of 75% localisation of business rates and the revised funding formula, although the recent closure of one of the largest local businesses highlighted the difficulties facing the economy.

Whilst the recent budget had set out the Government's overall public sector spending figure for the coming years, the 2019 Spending Review would allocate resources between government departments, providing councils with a better understanding of the likely resources available in the medium term. The changes meant that there would be additional risks to future funding levels which would require careful management. Therefore, the financial position modelled in the report on a current basis, could result in a rather different position by the end of the forecast period. The new Council to be elected in May 2019 would need to be clear about its priorities and make resource allocation decisions accordingly.

It was noted that there were significant areas of uncertainty in the coming years, including the impacts of the Brexit process, local government funding changes, and the 2017 Business Rate revaluation outcomes locally. The Council had robust risk management processes in place and, alongside the quarterly performance reporting, would update the likely future impacts as the situation became clearer.

In developing the Council's budget proposals for 2019/20, it had managed inflationary pressures on operational costs and pressures on some areas of income collection. Areas where net budget reductions had been delivered to produce a balanced budget included Leisure Services and Planning.



In order to deliver a balanced budget beyond 2019/20 and develop proposals for a secure medium term financial position the Council would seek innovative opportunities to achieve the annual budget reductions required without adversely affecting service delivery or compromising on its priorities.

Reports would be presented for deliberation and approval as projects were worked up, which would mean a refresh of the Transformation Programme once the future funding position became clearer.

Members asked a range of questions and made various comments on aspects of the proposed key proposals, including the consultation responses; treasury management training for members; the proposed fees and charges; sourcing and securing external funding; the expected reduction in business rates and the 100% pilot that allowed the Council to gain more than otherwise it would have; the internal drainage board levies; and the proposed council tax increase.

Members supported the proposals and recommended the draft's approval to Cabinet and Full Council.

The Committee received a presentation on the **APPLICATION DATA AROUND THE LICENSING PROCESS** with respect to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). All HMOs that house five or more people who form two or more households that share basic amenities, regardless of the number of storeys the accommodation is spread over, must be licensed and failure to hold a licence or have applied for a licence is a criminal offence.

The Committee heard that, of the 102 applications submitted, only one was likely to be refused. The Council had inspected 101 properties, issued 78 full licences with another 22 full licences pending and collected £84,565.90. In conclusion, it was noted that the Borough had 101 well-managed, well-maintained HMOs that provided their residents with safe, good quality accommodation and officers were on the street to check for compliance, going door to door in areas the data showed were more likely to have HMOs.

The Committee received a presentation on the **JOINT HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY FOR LINCOLNSHIRE (JHWS)** from the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board, also the County Council's Executive Councillor for NHS Liaison and Community Engagement, and the Director of Public Health for Lincolnshire.

The purpose of the JHWS was to set out the strategic commissioning direction for the next five years for all organisations who commissioned services in order to improve the health and wellbeing of the population and reduce inequalities.

The presentation explained the strategy's aims and themes and also set out a profile of Boston, which included statistics relating to population demographics, deprivation,



healthcare, health inequalities, child and adult health, mental health and the care provided by unpaid carers. Further statistics were set out relating to obesity, dementia, physical activity, and the relationship between housing and health. It was stressed that the districts and the county needed to work together on the strategy.

Members asked a range of questions and discussions covered digital technology tools to access help and support in terms of prevention and self-care; the true population figures for Boston; the major issue of the increase in the percentage of people aged over 65; the significant percentage of early deaths from cardiovascular disease considered preventable; vaping significantly reduced risks to health compared to smoking cigarettes; the need for everyone to have regular health checks, to look after their health and get to know the basics of healthcare, which would save money in the long-term. Social media was used, but a national programme and campaign was needed.

Members also received more information on the considerable impact that improving diets would have on health, particularly in relation to diabetes and stroke, and in terms of early deaths and disabilities; the significant impact that could be made on the level of dental decay if a decision was made to include Boston on the fluoride area; lack of physical activity and intake of sugar being the reasons that the percentage of overweight or obese children in Boston was the highest in Lincolnshire and worse than the national average; how carers were crucial to the success of healthcare and needed support; and that physical activity schemes, such as the healthy walking groups, helped significantly and were particularly advantageous to health and wellbeing if they also involved engaging with other people.

After in-depth discussions, it was agreed that the strategy should be added to the work programme for the Committee to receive a six-monthly update.



Environment and Performance Committee

At its first meeting the committee received the statutory annual update report **CRIME & DISORDER ANNUAL REVIEW/ASB/PSPO (ALCOHOL) STATISTICS 2017/18** by the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer confirming team members on the Council's Community Safety Team, continued to work alongside numerous partner agencies, particularly the Neighbourhood Policing Team based at Boston Police Station.

The second report tabled on this agenda was the statutory annual update report **CCTV POLICY REVIEW AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE UPDATE** by the Community Safety Manager

Each report is tabled to allow updating on performance factors on the respective service areas and to allow members to both review, comment, and also challenge the information presented. The reports are performance monitoring ensuring that members are made aware of activity; issues and potential areas which may require future scrutiny.

The second meeting of the committee held on the 17 July 2018 was a single item agenda which tabled the final report of the **TASK AND FINISH GROUPS' REVIEW OF THE MARKETS OFFER IN BOSTON**. Detailed reporting and discussion took place in respect of the depth of the review and the committee agreed the recommendations tabled by the group. (See section 7 below for a more detailed report on the Review).

On the 4th September the Operations Manager presented an update on the **ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE DURING 2017/18** to enable Members to scrutinise the success of the approach taken to tackle environmental crime. Members were advised the Council provided key aims to maintain the cleanliness of the Borough and to ensure the streets and public open spaces were kept as clean and tidy as possible and the committee had been instrumental in supporting and shaping the robust, strategic and co-ordinated approach taken with respect to littering, which had changed from being reactive to proactive due to the work undertaken. The Council had adopted HM Government's Litter Strategy for England in February, which had set out the strategic direction in respect of achieving a clean and healthy environment and provided a package of tools and new legislation enabling local authorities to deal more effectively with litter and environmental crimes.

Members asked various questions and concerns including the issue of contaminated bins and the lack of fixed penalty notices issued for gum and cigarette littering. Members also recognised the support of North Sea Camp and the work Fly-Swat team in tackling problems.



Outcomes agreed by the committee included an invitation to be issued to all parish councils for them to take part in the Litter Champions Programme. Furthermore it was requested that officers provide a breakdown of Fixed Penalty Notices in future reporting.

At its meeting on the 8 November 2018 committee were subject to act as consultees on the **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION - BOSTON ALTERNATIVE ENERGY FACILITY**. Members were advised that there were only two aspects for their consideration within the report tabled: the first was the statement of the consultation whereby members were asked to consider if it was reasonable, and if not, to identify any consultation areas which may have been missed; the second part required consideration as to whether or not the information provided was sufficient to clearly identify what the proposal and structure was.

Following lengthy deliberation in respect of the consultation by the committee who were very thorough in their questioning and considerations, it was agreed that due to the significant volume of response, draft minutes would be produced and issued to committee members for their consideration. The Chairman Councillor Judith Skinner would be delegated powers to agree the final draft of the minutes and the official response, along with, the Deputy Chief Executive and then issue the document for Cabinet without the need to reconvene the committee to agree the final response.

Addressing the first requisite of the report, the committee agreed to request the inclusion of additional consultation streams within the consultation process and extend the consultation area and venues in order to include a wider scope of residents and gain greater feedback; ensure ease of access to the venues all the respective residents; allow on-going information to be readily available for public interest in the development at a central point

Addressing the second requisite of the report the committee agreed that additional information should be provided to clearly identify the proposal and set out their reason in order to all the public to have detailed information to give them a clear understanding and allay concerns and offer reassurance.

Summarising the general comments of the meeting, Members agreed the benefits of such a development for the town of Boston. They acknowledged the employment benefits it would create – both in construction and thereafter in on-going supply and maintenance. Consultation was agreed as being key for residents and they agreed that the additional requests for inclusion in the statement as identified, would reassure them that the scope of consultation was reasonable. The outstanding points for information to be included had also been agreed to allow clear identification of the project.



Whilst Members commended the report, they also noted five separate items identified for consideration and action by the developer which, although not direct to the consultation process, they felt were fundamental in taking the project forward for Boston.

They related to:

- Information on funding streams available for residents to help them mitigate the impact of the construction in their area;
- Information in respect of potential tendering for work on the development to be signposted by the developer to enable local businesses to be made aware of opportunities with clear direction on the tendering process;
- The request for serious consideration of the provision of a link road from the roundabout direct to the site should be given as this would also benefit local residents and businesses;
- Serious consideration of a soft landscaping scheme, which would establish quicker and provide screening to integrate the site into the landscape;
- The developer to consult with Royal Mail in respect of the mail drop it undertook on their behalf, within a five kilometre radius of the site, as not all residents in close proximity to the site had received the mail shot.

The Committee recognised the depth of their consideration and scrutiny of the consultation exercise and agreed that the outcomes it had produced were representative, and on behalf of, both neighbouring and wide ranging residents and businesses within the Borough of Boston.

At the same meeting, the Committee received the final version of the **JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR LINCOLNSHIRE**. The Strategy had been tabled for consultation through the Committee at the last meeting of the previous year.

The Committee hosted two briefing events for all Members in 2018/19 relating to the development of the Strategy by the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership (LWP) of which this Council is a Member.

The first briefing event in March 2018 was to inform and consult Members on the draft version of the Strategy, in particular the proposed strategic objectives, before the LWP released the document for three months of public consultation. The briefing session was delivered by Officers from the LWP and Head of Environmental Operations in order to ensure that Members understood what the strategy was setting out to achieve, to shape the draft objectives and to collate relevant comments from all members of the Council. The briefing enabled Officers to assemble the feedback and present it to the Committee and seeking approval to submit the feedback to the LWP as the Council's formal response to the public consultation on the Waste Management Strategy for Lincolnshire.



The second Member Briefing in October 2018 was held to inform Members of the changes made to the Strategy and to gather any further feedback to inform the decision put before the Committee, to approve (or not) the final version of the Strategy for adoption by the Council and the LWP.

Both Member Briefing events enabled Elected Members to have a very full and frank discussion about the Strategy and enabled a broad spectrum of views to inform and shape the draft version of the strategy and to fully understand the implications of the final Strategy prior to adoption by the Council. It would not have been possible to have covered the same ground within the confines of a Committee meeting nor to have engaged the wider elected member cohort in the discussion of a broad topic that affected every householder.

Development of the Strategy been a significant task which the LWP had been working on for over a year. It would provide the cornerstone for future working arrangements in the County influencing the way that Lincolnshire Waste Partnership worked and the landscape of waste disposal and collection arrangements across the county. It would impact each and every resident of both Boston and Lincolnshire and shape how the County Council as a waste disposal authority along with the seven district councils would work together to manage the 360000 tonnes of household waste produced in Lincolnshire each year.

Members heard details of the vision sought by the LWP to work together to protect the environment by delivering sustainable waste management services which drove best value across the County and the core objectives underpinning the vision, along with an action plan to steer the delivery. Public feedback wholeheartedly supported the objectives as being right for the people of Lincolnshire and the action plan would provide the mechanism through which progress reporting would be provided to, and monitored by, the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership.

The Strategy set out challenging objectives which would require Members of all authorities to make difficult choices over the coming year. The reason being they had to fundamentally challenge the way waste services were currently provided to residents because of the approaching challenges.

Members received details of the 147 responses to the public consultation and the changes made to the Strategy to reflect the feedback. Key themes had emerged, many of which reflected the feedback from the Committee including education and communication to residents, harmonising collection methods and waste streams across the county to make it easy to do the right thing. It was explicit in the feedback from the public that we seek to manage costs but not to the detriment of the environment.



The final document included an initial action plan which was absent from the draft version. Inclusion of the action plan with the strategy was a direct result of public feedback and although a work in progress, it provided members with an indication of the focus of work for the partnership over the next few months.

Following further questions and comments, the Committee endorsed the Waste Management Strategy for Lincolnshire and recommended to Cabinet for formal adopted by the Council (subject to the Strategy in the same form being formally adopted by all the waste collection authorities in Lincolnshire). The Strategy was adopted by Cabinet on 28th November 2018, as recommended by the Committee.

All Councillors were invited to attend the meeting held on 8th January 2019 at which the Economic Development Manager presented an **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POSITION STATEMENT** to allow members to consider the progress made against the rolling economic development action plan. The report was purely informative and Committee were advised that the plan had a clear vision which was to create a strong, successful and resilient economy that worked for all by positioning the borough as a destination of choice for not only investing in, but for working in, living in and also for visiting.

The Council was challenging perception and unlocking the potential of Boston via positive messages and positive marketing to attract even further economic investment.

The plan had four key objectives:

1. To promote and support inward investment into the borough
2. To support business development and growth of new and existing business.
3. To support housing growth and infrastructure development
4. To develop tourism, heritage and cultural opportunities.

With all four objectives being closely aligned to the strategic Prosperity Priority set out in the Council Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 to deliver a clear sense of direction and overall 'open for business' vision for the borough.

Following a detailed report highlighting economic development within the borough, all committee members agreed the professionalism of the reporting and quality of content therein. There was agreement it was a success story which needed to be projected across all streams of the media with ongoing increased activity in marketing and PR. There was overall support of the ongoing activity to improve promotion of the borough and of working with the students in encouraging a greater skills base for local employers.



At its final meeting on 3rd March 2019, the committee considered a report on the activity of the **PILGRIMS 2020 & ALLIED OPPORTUNITIES EVENTS**. The previous year, the committee had agreed a programme of events asked for a follow up report to allow committee to monitor the outcomes of the funding applications. A further report had been presented to Cabinet on 21st February 2018 detailing the ambitions alongside a request for support of specific elements of funding to allow the projects to progress. The requests for funding were approved as it was recognised the programme fulfilled the Corporate objectives of:

- Prosperity – Attracting people and businesses to the area by raising the profile of Boston supporting the promotion of inward investment and developing our tourism, heritage and cultural opportunities.
- People – supporting our role in meeting wider health & wellbeing needs of our community by continuing to work closely with our partners, &
- Place – supporting Boston as a place which offers a quality way of life for residents.

Reporting back on the outcomes of the funding applications the officer confirmed that The Mayflower 400 group which had been led by Plymouth City Council had secured a £500k grant from Visit England in May 2016 to promote the national Mayflower Pilgrims story overseas: during 2018 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport agreed a similar amount to allow continuation of activity into 2019. The Mayflower 400 group which had been led by Plymouth City Council had secured a £500k grant from Visit England in May 2016 to promote the national Mayflower Pilgrims story overseas: during 2018 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport agreed a similar amount to allow continuation of activity into 2019.

Plymouth had nationally led the development of a bid to secure Arts Council England (ACE) funding to support artistic development of an 'Illuminate' event in their region. If successful it could help reinforce Boston's own 'Illuminate' event which had been delivered successfully over the last five years at the towns Christmas events

Referencing Boston specific projects the officer advised that a BID for funding of £60k had been submitted to build on the HLF funded Explore and Discover project. It had been proposed to deliver the project in two stages with the first prioritising activities for Pilgrim specific resources ready for early 2020: the second was continuing to develop wider American maritime and local histories to commemorate the connections for all audiences. Boston Borough Council had made a commitment to match fund with £10k to support the project and a further £10k had been secured through Lincolnshire County Council. The programme in total would cost £80k.

Funding for the bouys was initially £14k match funding from Boston Big Local through a service level agreement with Boston In Bloom. The Council had through its existing budgets agreed to support with a contribution of £1k.



Following work with the Environment Agency in respect of exploring investing in the arts, in September 2018 they agreed to contribute an extra £14k to allow another buoy to be sited close to the barrier scheme.

Further updating noted activity across 2020 and also 2030, which was of more relevance to Boston and a request was made for further updating as the events progressed to allow monitoring of the success of funding and also on the programme of events.



6. Task and Finish Reviews

LINCOLNSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PLAN (STP) TASK AND FINISH GROUP

This group had been set up by the Corporate and Community Committee in 2016/17 to achieve a greater understanding of the STP, which was published by Lincolnshire Health Organisations, at the request of Cabinet in order to guide input into the consultation process.

The group held an initial meeting with the STP Programme Director and scoped their activity, agreeing to concentrate on the key issues affecting Boston. It was anticipated a public consultation would commence in September 2017; however, this did not materialise and, therefore, the group decided to focus its efforts instead on better understanding the context in preparation for the planned consultation and the work of the group continued into 2017/18.

A number of external advisors were appointed on a voluntary basis to form a health advisory panel for the group. A series of fact-finding meetings were subsequently set up with senior NHS staff based on topic themes, including mental health and learning disabilities, women and children's services and stroke services.

A recurring theme emerging at the group's meetings was the problem of recruiting and retention of staff, an issue not unique to NHS Lincolnshire, although it was hoped the announcement of the opening of a new Medical School in Lincoln would help to ease these problems over time.

The next step was to arrange an all-Member briefing on the STP in the Spring prior to the planned public consultation expected in April, but the consultation was further postponed when United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust (ULHT) was placed in special measures again. While significant progress had been made in some key areas, particularly mental health and Neighbourhood Teams (integrated working), there continued to be significant uncertainty regarding future plans for acute hospital services in Lincolnshire and without firm options or proposals it was felt premature to proceed with a Member briefing.

An Acute Services Review was underway, which was expected to suggest significant service change and require capital investment. The STP team was unable to share any of its findings at that stage and the latest indications were that this would not be available for public consultation in 2018 due to the requirement for national input. However, it was suggested that it might be useful for Members to receive a briefing on the factors influencing the review, which would have a significant impact on Pilgrim Hospital. Such a briefing could also outline the practical steps currently being undertaken by ULHT to try to avoid any form of closure of children's services at Pilgrim Hospital.



On 1st August 2018, the committee considered an update on the Task and Finish Group's work. At the meeting, the Chairman took questions from nine members of the public in accordance with the Council's procedures for asking questions at meetings.

Guest speakers attended, which were the Accountable Officer for Lincolnshire East Clinical Commissioning Group; the Chief Officer for South and South West Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Groups and Senior Executive with responsibility for the Lincolnshire Sustainability and Transformation Partnership; and the Medical Director and Consultant Dermatologist, United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust. The Member of Parliament for Boston and Skegness was also in attendance to answer questions and give his views.

Following presentations, a thorough debate and lengthy question and answer session, it was agreed that a workshop be arranged for the group in order to examine the outcomes from the committee's meeting. The Chairman closed proceedings by thanking the members of the public for their input and for their future support, as the meeting had demonstrated the value of engaging with the public on these matters.

MARKETS REVIEW

On conclusion of a substantial task and finish review initiated by the Environment and Performance Committee, which had scrutinised many services areas across Boston with a view to improving the town both as both a tourist destination and for the benefit of local people, one area was identified as requiring a more individual in-depth level of scrutiny. The group recommended that a new review be undertaken to re-visit the existing markets offer at that time and look at ways to maintain Boston's historical market and its unique selling offer, in an ever changing world of consumer buying.

The recommendation was supported by feedback from the initial consultation process and a decline in traders on the market and income from the market, which could potentially result in both a loss of visitors and also local people supporting the markets.

It was agreed that the same group would execute the new review: the members had already accumulated knowledge in respect of the markets from the initial consultations and research undertaken.

During scoping of the review the group agreed further consultation was required and that a pre-requisite would be the input of the future users of the markets and the future residents of the town. Looking into the options for inclusion of the schools within the task, the group agreed that they would 'challenge' schools to undertake



their own review of the markets and then produce their own report of their findings and present it at an official meeting of the group.

Further consultation was agreed with the market traders direct; with the local businesses in and around the town centre and with the public consultation via the website and also hard copy questionnaires. Four schools within the borough accepted the task and the students were all invited to a meeting at Boston's Guildhall where the Chairman of the group officially set the challenge.

On Wednesday 16 May 2018 four groups of students, accompanied by teachers from their establishments, undertook their official visits to the Boston markets where they enthusiastically carried out their own reviews of the market offer at Bargate Green and the market offer within the Market Place. Officers escorted the groups and were available to answer questions relating to market activity and the town overall.

On closure of the market traders, the commercial and public consultations, collation of the feedback returned common issues from all three. One of which was the need for a better mix on the markets; another was an urgent need for improved promotion and better signage across the town centre and other key concerns included issues in respect of littering; the impact of the buses through the market place and the negative appearance of long term empty shops. However, there was overwhelming support of the markets offer in the town and the benefit of it for both local people and as an attraction for visitors. Furthermore local businesses around the town agreed that the market impacted on their own activity in a productive way. One reassuring outcome was the notice by 90% of the market traders who responded, stating it was their intent to keep trading in Boston for the foreseeable future.

The outcome of the students review culminated with each of the four schools attending a meeting of the group on July 7 2018 and presenting their reports direct to the group members, along with the portfolio holder and the Leader of the Council.

The students involved presented on behalf of:

- Boston Grammar School
- Boston High School
- Giles Academy
- Haven High Academy.

The respective teachers from each establishment noted the benefits of the exercise for their students and Councillors recognised and congratulated the schools on the quality of their reports and on their professionalism of reporting to the meeting and their recommendations are noted as follows:



- A 'Welcome' sign needed to be implemented at the entrance to the market place from Wide Bargate.
- New bigger signs were needed.
- There is no sign from Wide Bargate showing where the Market Place is.
- Street performers should be encouraged to create an atmosphere as the market place lacked any atmosphere at all and was dull and drab.
- Local theatre groups and dance groups should be allowed to perform alongside the stalls. Musicians of all types should be encouraged and offered free sites within the market to play. Specific Cultural events should be put on in the summer time.
- A dedicated Artisan Food area should be provided ideally outside Lloyds Bank with the Stump as a back drop. The Council should actively promote and source Artisan traders to a specific Artisan market.
- The Market should be zoned. Specific areas for ease of customers with possibly colour co-ordinated canopies. Some areas in the market were claustrophobic with stalls too close together whilst others were wide apart making it look a mess.
- The Market Place needs to be cleaner. Rubbish was over-flowing from bins and was dangerous and made the market feel dirty and look unhealthy. Furthermore some stalls with fresh food had litter around them. (*New Public Rubbish Bins have been installed and the Trader Bins now being looked into*)
- The Tourist Information Centre should be re-located onto the market especially in the busy months.
- The market place should be pedestrianised as the buses are dangerous and the market could then fill the whole of the market place.
- More public seating was required. (*New seats have been installed*)
- The canopies needed to be updated all in the same striped theme.
- A large public notice board should be placed in the market place for ease of reference for all residents on activity within the borough.
- A large public notice board should be put in the market place.
- A youth market or stalls for students should be introduced during the summer holidays alongside the established markets or on Bargate Green. Pop-Up Foodstalls would also be a good draw especially in the summer months, offering foodstuffs not currently on the markets. It would encourage students to use the markets during lunch breaks and in the holidays.
- The cleanliness of the markets needed improving. Some stalls looked unhygienic. Pet foods stalls should not be located next to fresh food stalls. Smoking and Vaping should not be allowed on the markets.

Here is the link to the schools report:

<https://moderngov.boston.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=1339>



Drawing the review to its conclusion the group's final task was consideration of the Markets Policy to address the main issues highlighted throughout the consultation process. The group agreed the following three amendments to the Markets Policy:

- That no smoking or vaping by traders be permitted on the markets.
- That the Tenant Mix be simplified in order to allow traders to stand without the proportionate allowance being a bar to any trader who turns up to the market.
- That casual traders to be allocated available pitches on the day of the market.

The final report of the review was tabled through Cabinet on the 5th September 2017 at where Cabinet agreed the following final recommendations:

1. The amended Markets Policy at Appendix E be adopted with the amendment of paragraph 17.1 by deleting the works 'but shall determine the application having due regard to the currently adopted tenant mix' and the deletion of paragraph 9.5.
2. Investigations into the possibility of implementing a Welcome Archway at the entrance to the market place from Narrow Bargate be agreed, with a report being returned once the investigations are completed.
3. The introduction of a 'Cultural' offer supporting the markets be agreed.
4. The consideration of providing stalls for students to trade on during school holidays' to encourage potential future traders be supported.
5. An increase to the size of the existing signage to provide larger scale signs, in particular showing direction from the Market Place to Bargate Green and vice versa be agreed.
6. The importance of the contribution of the four schools within the consultation process and the quality of their reporting be recognised and agreed.



7. Inquiry Days

One Inquiry Day was held by the Environment and Performance Committee on Monday 14th January 2019 to allow members to look at and discuss the draft **WASTE RECYCLING OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES POLICY** produced to consolidate the custom and practice and operational arrangements adopted by the waste and recycling services, into one document.

Members were advised that in general the arrangements would not be changed, nor would there be any substantial changes to the current practices. The document would eliminate any inconsistencies or misunderstandings in respect of how the operational matters were facilitated across the Council: it would provide a definitive reference point for both staff and members of the public and also evidence any back-up decision making to protect the Council from unfair or unjustified criticism from the public or the Ombudsmen.

On conclusion of the deliberation all members acknowledged the benefits of the Inquiry session, agreeing that the open discussions allowed them to fully comprehend the new policy and all it entailed. Members all tabled their support of the new policy which they all agreed would provide the all parties with an ease of access to source the information they required, alongside supporting the Council in respect of any complaint or criticism.

8. Looking to the Year Ahead

The following are being considered in order to continue to support and improve the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function:

- The early development of work programmes for the year ahead through liaison with the Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and lead officers on both Committees;
- Support for further Inquiry Days and Task and Finish Group activity;
- The training and development needs of Scrutiny Members;
- Getting members of the public involved: an ongoing campaign will continue with regular features in the Boston Bulletin about attending meetings and how to get involved.

A “suggestions” form for members of the public to use appears on the next page.



BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY SUGGESTION FORM

Boston Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees welcome suggestions from members of the public who may have ideas for matters that the committees could scrutinise.

You can let us know of your suggestions by e-mail to Democratic@boston.gov.uk or by completing and detaching the form below and posting it to: Democratic Services, Boston Borough Council, Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR.

Name:	
e-mail:	
Telephone:	
Suggestion:	
Reasons:	

